1975 – CAPTAIN FANTASTIC AND THE BROWN DIRT COWBOY

This special was available in July 2005 on http://www.eltonjohn.com, unfortunately was withdrawn long time ago, but thanks to http://www.web.archive.org, I was able to locate and recover it. Maybe some of you remember this…I wasn´t able to find out the credit of all of this, so kudos whoever you are (were).

I´m sure any Elton John fan will be happy to have it, even if there is nothing new on it. In the end…We already know everything of this album, don´t we ;-) ??

(I´m looking for EJ old magazines, articles and stuff like that, if you too, contact with me → antonio.msn@gmail.com , I´m sure we can arrange something)

And please, share this. Any EJ fan should have these things. Who knows how many old articles, interviews, etc, are missing…Forever…

I hope you enjoy it.

Antonio
(2025/10/08)

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2005/07/29 – CAPTAIN FANTASTIC AND THE BROWN DIRT COWBOY – 30TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

THE ALBUM

30 Years of *'A Once Upon A Time...'*

Captain Fantastic And The Brown Dirt Cowboy is a vivid, nostalgic story of both the dark, harsh realities of the music business, and of the companionship and innocence of two unlikely characters who would eventually overcome obstacles to realize their dream. For this reason, it remains my favorite Elton John album, because it's real. It mixes dreams and reality, and it reminds me of my own innocence when I first experienced it. As an 11 year-old feeling its heft, being mesmerized by its front and back cover, and then immediately losing myself in its music and lyrics, I had no idea of the lasting wonders, treasures, lessons, moments and memories it would create and sustain for me.

But 30 year later its influence, music, messages and aura remain as fresh, urgent and emotive as ever. It has been a pleasurable labor of love conceptualizing, researching, compiling and writing this feature about Captain Fantastic And The Brown Dirt Cowboy. In the process, it has enabled me to re-visit its special place in time, and its special place in my time. For me, this album is still green and growing.

For all the Captain Fantastic fans out there, I hope this feature will help bring back your own cherished memories of this album, and maybe even help to create new ones for the future. When it comes to Captain Fantastic And The Brown Dirt Cowboy, yes, we really do fall in love sometimes.

MUSICIANS

- **Elton John** – Lead Vocal, Harmonies, Electric Piano, Acoustic Piano, Clavinet, Arp String Ensemble Synthesizer, Harpsichord &Mellotron
- **Dee Murray** – Bass & Backing Vocals
- **Nigel Olsson** – Drums & Backing Vocals
- **Davey Johnstone** – Acoustic Guitar, Electric Guitar, Mandolin & Backing Vocals
- **Ray Cooper** – Percussion
- **Dave Hentschel** – A.R.P. Synthesiser
- **Gene Page** – Orchestral Arrangement
- Produced by – **Gus Dudgeon**

1975: ELTON, IT WAS A VERY GOOD YEAR

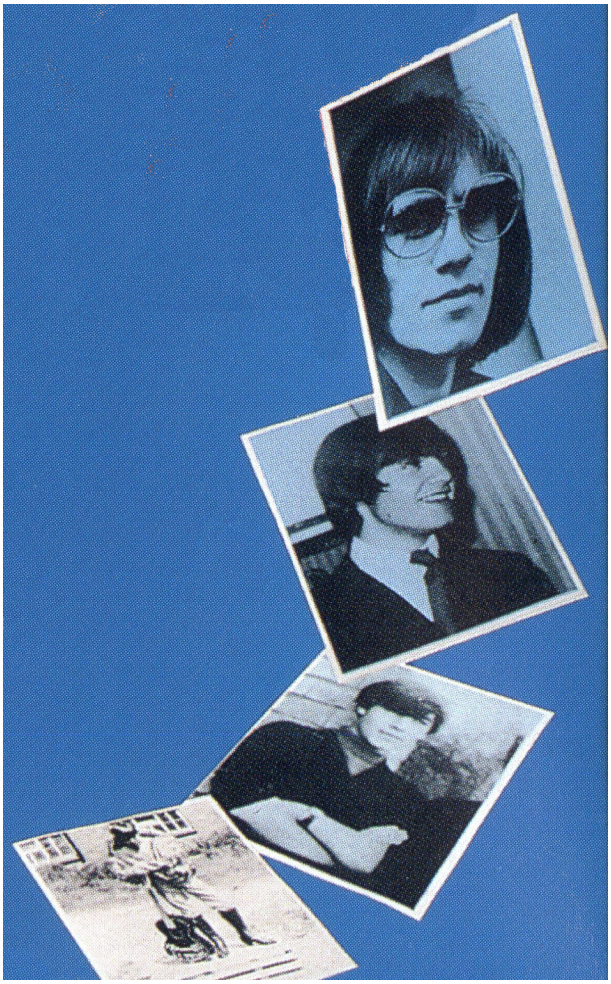
Few entertainers have even hinted at the galactic height of success, accomplishment and popularity that Elton John has achieved in his four-decade career. Elton created his first stir in 1970 with his classic single, Your Song, and his debut U.S. album, the self-titled, Elton John. He then released a series of critically acclaimed albums in 1971, including Tumbleweed Connection and Madman Across The Water.

But it wasn't until 1972, with the Number One album, Honky Chateau, and its Number One single, Rocket Man, that Elton John became a legitimate superstar. His popularity and success began to gain in '72 and '74, but in 1975, Elton John experienced a stratospheric level of fame and success that few entertainers can claim. Remember, he achieved this during the pre-MTV, pre-iPod, pre-downloading, pre-'American/Pop Idol' era, when rock music didn't blanket the pop culture landscape. In 1975, rock music was just beginning to gain cultural acceptance to become a mainstream audience attraction. And it was in this year that Elton John surpassed all his peers, and even forced longtime legends like Frank Sinatra to take notice. Some gasp at the dizzying peaks experienced by acts including Michael Jackson, Madonna or Bruce Springsteen, but none of them came close to the total entertainment domination that Elton John enjoyed in 1975.

Here are a few of his accomplishments in that amazing year.

If you were around, you know what it was like, and if you weren't, you shoulda been there...

- The single, Lucy In the Sky With Diamonds (recorded during the Captain Fantastic sessions) reached # 1 in the U.S. for two straight weeks in December 1974, and remained on the charts and on radio into early 1975
- Elton's first album, 1969's Empty Sky, was released for the first time in the U.S., in January 1975
- In February 1975, Elton appeared as guest on a U.S. television special 'Cher', in which he performed Bennie And The Jets with Cher, Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds alone, and a medley of rock classics with Cher and Bette Midler
- The single, Philadelphia Freedom (recorded during Captain Fantastic sessions) released in March, reached # 1 in the U.S. for two straight weeks
- Elton John was the first white performer to appear on the U.S. black music television show, 'Soul Train'. He sang his hit Philadelphia Freedom
- Elton hosted the 'Rock Awards' in U.S. with Cher and Diana Ross
- Elton performed Pinball Wizard in The Who's musical film, Tommy
- The album, Captain Fantastic And The Brown Dirt Cowboy was released in May 1975, and entered the U.S. album chart at #1 (where it remained for seven straight weeks)
- Taupin released a book of his lyrics titled, 'The One Who Writes The Words For Elton John'. The book includes illustrations by Captain Fantastic illustrator, Alan Aldridge



- On June 21, at London's outdoor venue, Wembley Stadium, at the Midsummer Music Festival (with the Beach Boys, Rufus, The Eagles, Joe Walsh, and Stackridge also on the bill), Elton and his new band debuted Captain Fantastic And The Brown Dirt Cowboy, playing the entire album in running order. The impatient crowd did not appreciate the bold, artistic move

- Elton appeared (in an illustration) on the July 7, 1975 cover of TIME Magazine with the banner 'Rock's Captain Fantastic'

- Someone Saved My Life Tonight climbs to #4 on the U.S. chart

- On August 25-26, Elton returned to Los Angeles' Troubadour club to celebrate 'Five Years Of Fun', the fifth anniversary of his triumphant U.S. debut credited with making him a star

- Rock Of The Westies was released in September and also entered the U.S. Billboard Album chart at #1 (it became only the second album to do it). This was Elton's seventh consecutive #1 in U.S., beginning in 1972. (It would be his last Number One album until 1994's The Lion King film soundtrack)

- The single Island Girl reached #1 on the U.S. charts and remained there for three weeks

- On Oct. 25-26, Elton performed at Dodger Stadium, in Los Angeles, with more than 100,000 people attending the two shows. He was the first rock act to play the famed baseball stadium since The Beatles.

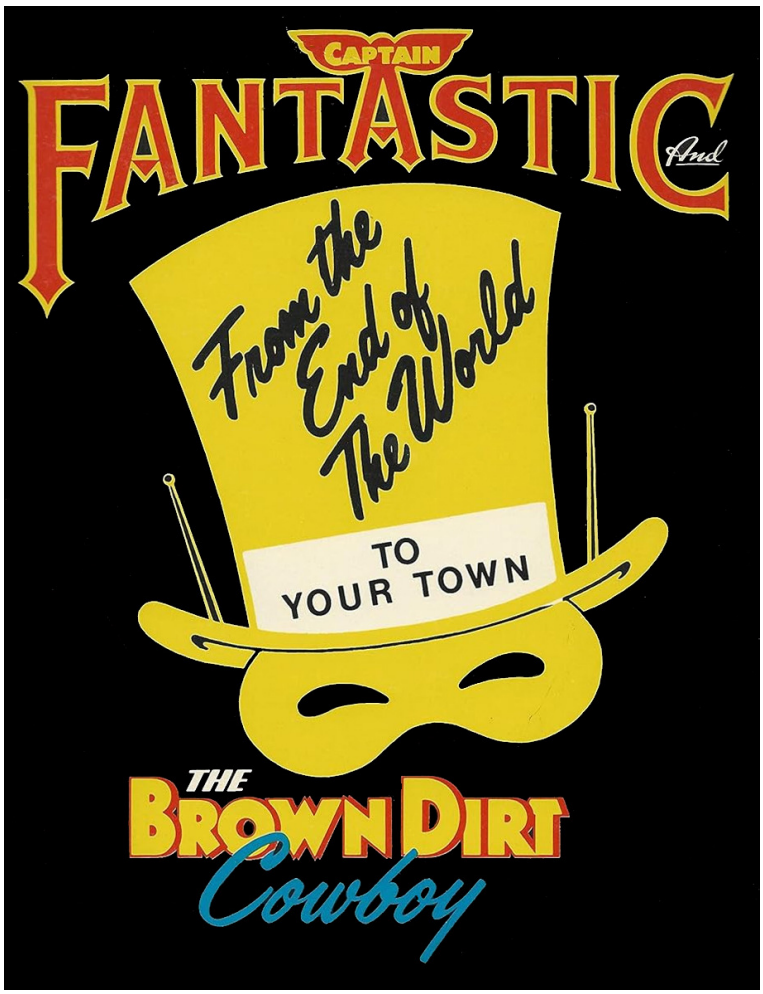
- The ticket price for the show was $10.

THE STORY

"This album is dedicated to our friends, and the guiding hands that steered us the right way in our early years". -- taken from the Acknowledgements from Captain Fantastic And The Brown Dirt Cowboy.

Though the legend of 'The Captain And The Kid' is still evolving 30 years after their star-crossed pairing, this story never tires.

The fanciful 'once upon a time' quality of Captain Fantastic And The Brown Dirt Cowboy represents the essence of Elton John's music, Bernie Taupin's lyrics, and their star-crossed partnership that continues to marry melody to lyric after almost 40 years.



Captain Fantastic stands as the most complete and charismatic of all Elton John albums. Its personality is the musical and lyrical embodiment of the composers themselves, and you can feel and hear the care, emotion and revealing reminiscence running throughout its 46 minutes and 43 seconds.

Captain Fantastic defied the ten-song, three-hit structure that dominated a good number of Elton's preceding albums. This true concept album was conceived and produced with personal passion, reflective nostalgia and loving care.

Coming off the phenomenal success of 1974's Greatest Hits, in 1975, Elton John was the world's undisputed heavyweight Rock'n'Roll champ. Eltonmania had captured the world since 1972- especially the United States - and anticipation in 1975 for a release of new, original music was feverish. This was proven when Captain Fantastic was released in May 1975. It entered the U.S. Billboard Album Chart at the number one position.

Never before had an album accomplished such a feat. It also was certified Platinum (1 million units) on its first day. Again, a first in the record business. Despite its grandiose title, media hype and the expectation of another radio-ready commercial product, Captain Fantastic was an overtly non-commercial, personal and sentimental musical storybook - not to be blared from speakers as disposable pop/rock background noise. It demanded a closer and more serious listen.

Written in its original running order, Taupin gave Captain Fantastic cohesion unlike any other Elton John album. The lyrics lead the listener from page to page of this enlightening tome, en route to a grand climax. Taupin's lyrics are central to the album's overall imprint and style. He unfolds the duo's storybook-like beginnings by deftly sprinkling these ten tightly written musical remembrances with numerous references to actual people, places, perspectives, occurrences, and moods. And while grounding the album in reality, he also allowed his words to meander into some of the best-turned and deliciously descriptive phrases he has ever put to paper.

Interestingly, Elton wrote all the music for the album during a five-day cruise from England to New York aboard the S.S. France, using the ship's piano during the crew's daily afternoon lunch break. His moving melodies embraced the power, emotion and detailed nostalgia of Taupin's creative storytelling. One can sense Elton had a genuine understanding of what Taupin was relating, and he sang and composed accordingly, cradling each lyrical memory into the appropriate musical setting. Elton clearly felt these songs in his heart and soul.

Producer Gus Dudgeon also offered his finest production performance. Elton's piano, often times the dominant sound, is here simply a component of the mix. This decision was responsible for showcasing just how interwoven the Elton John Band had become by this time. The band was at its pinnacle. Dudgeon pushed the musical talents of each band member - Davey Johnstone (guitar), Nigel Olsson (drums), Dee Murray (bass), and Ray Cooper (percussion) - to their potential. And in the process the band delivered incredible moments on a song-for-song basis. Ironically, after laying down the best sound and performances of their initial tenure with Elton, he broke up this band, leaving Captain Fantastic as its lasting legacy.

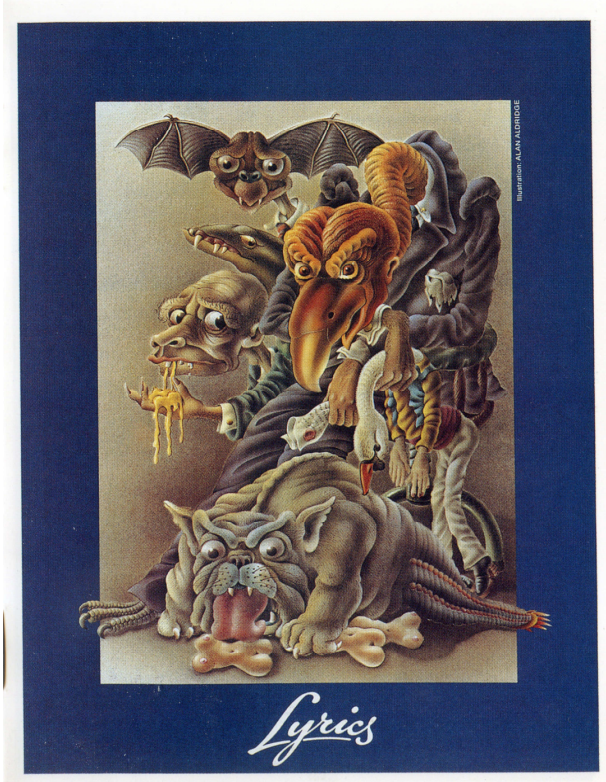
Taupin proved prophetic in writing this album, because 30 years later, Elton John has truly transformed into Captain Fantastic, a larger-than-life entertainment icon, as well as one of the world's most caring and tireless humanitarians. Equally, Taupin has achieved his dream of becoming the Brown Dirt Cowboy, living and working on an idyllic California ranch where he can make his rustic dreams come true.

The only thing Captain Fantastic lacks is a sequel. The content here only covers a couple of years, from their initial meeting in 1967 to the release of their first album, Empty Sky, in 1969. The more than 30 years that have followed are certainly filled with enough material to make a compelling follow-up. Just think of the power in relating through song the excitement in their rise to fame, their personal highs and lows, their struggles with drugs and their victories over them, and how they both now have found a new contentment with themselves, their lives and each other.

Amazingly, after 30 years, this album sounds fresh, alive and urgent. The fact that Captain Fantastic And The Brown Dirt Cowboy are still together, still melding their talents, only adds to the album's intrinsic, timeless quality. The Captain and The Kid and their rich lives, careers and experiences deserve to be explored in greater detail. But until that happens, if ever, this original and passionate first instalment offers an inviting once upon a time.

THE SONGS

Captain Fantastic And The Brown Dirt Cowboy must be 'read' chapter by chapter, as each song builds on the previous momentum and moves Elton and Bernie's story to its next chapter and ultimate destination.



Therefore, here's a 'chapter-by-chapter' look at each of these special songs.

- Captain Fantastic And The Brown Dirt Cowboy: Fittingly rustic and rocking, it introduces the protagonists with a nostalgic, vulnerable but determined swagger. Elton takes the music from the strums of the country to the muscle of the city. Taupin creatively chronicles their differing backgrounds, unlikely pairing, shared dreams and larger than life success. He also ups the irony that this dynamic duo will go on to entertain millions with the classic tag line, '*From the end of the world to your town'*.

- Tower Of Babel: Dee Murray's bass and Davey Johnstone's guitar drive this stinging diatribe, with Taupin denouncing on Biblical proportions, the debauchery, darkness, self-indulgence, and phoniness of the music business that he and Elton encounter as 'The Captain And The Kid' step into the ring. Taupin conveys how their climb up fame's slippery ladder to reach their lofty Rock'n'Roll goals and dreams isn't always what they'd hoped it would be.

- Bitter Fingers: A great example of how Elton is musically able to translate Taupin's shifting moods and sarcasm. In this castigation of music publisher Dick James and the pressures of Tin Pan Alley's assembly-line songwriting formula, Elton changes the song's tone from a jaunty romp to a mean-spirited tirade in a heartbeat, as Taupin vents their frustration at having their own songs being overlooked while being forced write meaningless pop songs for others.

- Tell Me When The Whistle Blows: One of the album's shining gems, with Taupin again battling with bits of homesickness and inner guilt at being a country boy in a city boy's clothing. Taupin's nostalgic lyrics and memories of his days in Lincolnshire strike a nerve, and with his phrase, '*Those diamante lovers in Hyde Park holding hands'* Taupin captures a mood like only he can. Gene Page's string arrangements, coupled with Johnstone's attacking solos and Elton's charged vocal, make this screech and hum like a train bolting from Kings Cross Station.

- Someone Saved My Life Tonight: After Taupin examined his own psychological motivations, he follows suit with an early watershed personal moment of Elton's life: His decision to break off a pending and ill-suited marriage that would have stifled him personally and professionally. This seven-minute exorcism is the most intimate song of Elton's career, and he sings it with a gut-wrenching swirl of conflicting emotions. Drummer Nigel Olsson's dramatic drum fills add to this song's angst and liberation. We all owe 'Sugar Bear' John Baldry an eternal debt.

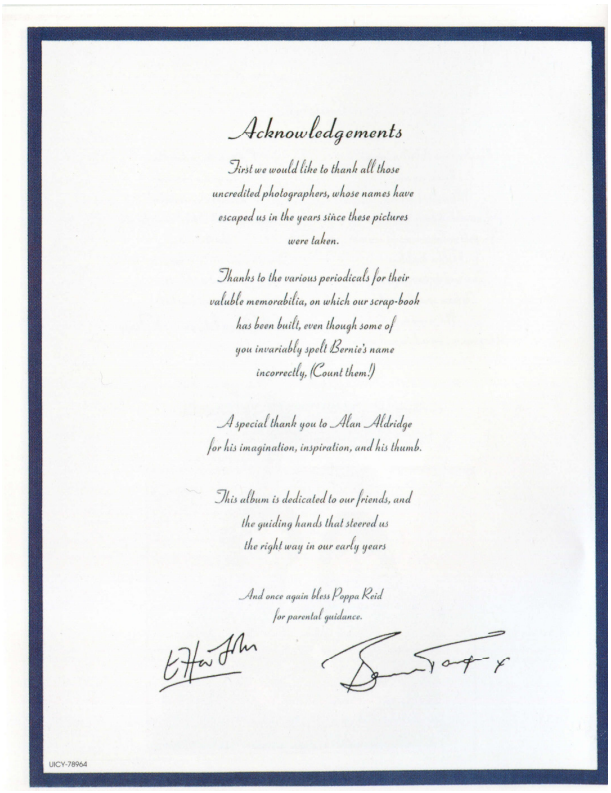
- (Gotta Get A) Meal Ticket: On the album's true lone rocker, Johnstone's guitar simmers, and Elton and Bernie again encounter the 'bottom line' of the rock business - dealing with agents, promoters and other hangers-on, and a working musician's daily desperation to make ends meet as they claw to make the big time.

- Better Off Dead: Carried by an almost mock operatic tone and Nigel Olsson's drum banging, the song recalls the grit of London's red light districts and other bohemian-like, 'inspired' streets and neighborhoods that were almost required locales for the hip and 'in crowd' in the late '60s.

- Writing: The giddy contentment of Taupin's lyric is sweetly captured by Elton's infectious melody. It touches on their early writing days at Islington, Frome Court, and Northwood Hills, bunking like campers and bonding like brothers, creating a style of songwriting that's '*always half and* half'. Unintentionally, this song of innocence and hope was the perfect precursor to Two Rooms at the End of the World, which examined the state of their writing partnership after the pains of success. Will they still be writing in approaching years? Thankfully, "Yes!"

- We All Fall in Love Sometimes: One of the best songs Elton and Taupin have ever written and recorded. This heartfelt recollection of love and finding passion is filled with uplifting background harmonies, crisp, tender Taupin imagery ('*it crackled on the speakers and trickled down the sleepy subway trains'*) and one of Elton's most honest, emotive vocals of his career.

- Curtains: Taupin gives the story its moving climax, encapsulating their entire journey from getting together to releasing their first album.


Acknowledgements
First we would like to thank all those uncredited photographers, whose names have escaped us in the years since these pictures were taken.
Thanks to the various periodicals for their valuable memorabilia, on which our scrap-book has been built, even though some of you invariably spelt Bernie's name incorrectly. (Count them!)
A special thank you to Alan Aldridge for his imagination, inspiration, and his thumb.
This album is dedicated to our friends, and the guiding hands that steered us the right way in our early years
And once again bless Poppa Reid for parental guidance.
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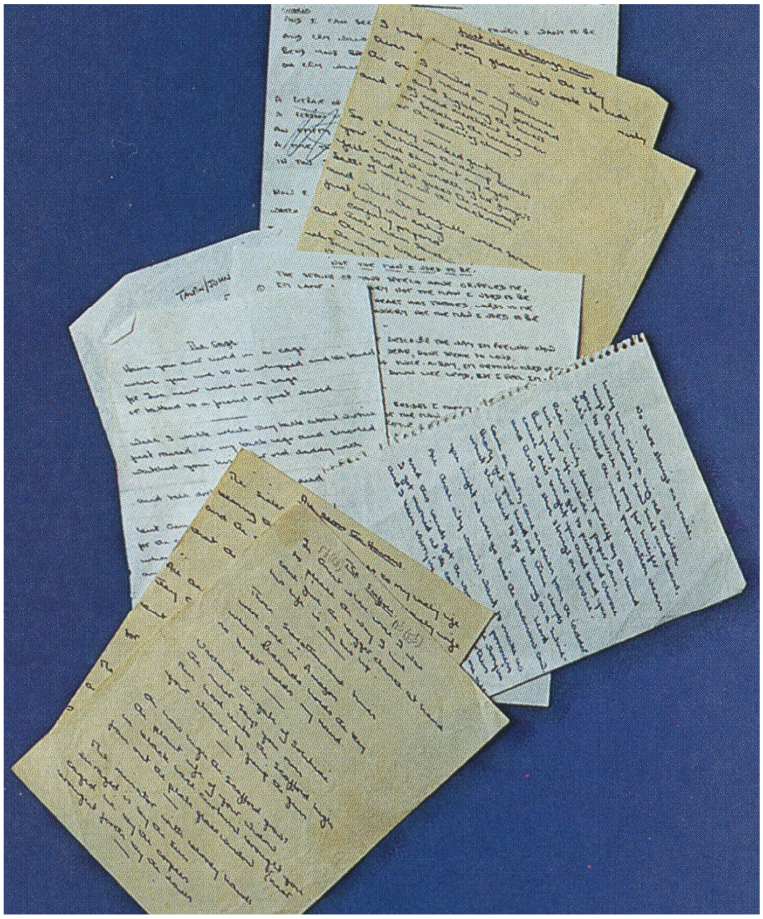
He makes subtle references to their early songs, including, '*I used to know this old scarecrow'* (Scarecrow) *and 'I held a dandelion that said the time had come'* (A Dandelion Dies In The Wind), and lovingly explains how their '*childish* words' were needed from them to grow individually as well as a team, and reach their '*could we, should we'* dreams...Together.

THE VITAL STATISTICS

Captain Fantastic And The Brown Dirt Cowboy:



- Was recorded in June-August, 1974, Caribou Ranch, Colorado
- Was released May, 1975
- Became the first album ever to enter the U.S. Billboard Album Chart at #1
- Remained in the #1 position on the U.S. charts for seven weeks
- Was certified as Platinum (1 millions copies sold) on first day of release
- Original version included the album, a poster of the full cover art, a lyric booklet, a scrapbook and an application to join the Elton John Fan Club
- The Taupin poem Dogs In The Kitchen is included in the lyric booklet, but no song of these lyrics was ever recorded. The poem reportedly was the catalyst for Taupin to create a concept album about their early writing career.
- Has sold more than 3 million copies to date
- Became the sixth consecutive EJ album to reach #1 in U.S., with the streak beginning in 1972 with Honky Chateau and ending in 1975 with Rock Of The Westies
- Received two Grammy nominations for Best Album and Best Pop Vocal, Male
- Artist Alan Aldridge receives a Grammy nomination for his cover design
- Was re-released in a new version in 1995. It was re-mastered by its producer, Gus Dudgeon, with bonus tracks added: Philadelphia Freedom, Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds and One Day At A Time
- Was re-mixed in 5.1 Digital Surround Sound in the SACD format version and re-released in 2004. The remixing was by Greg Penny, the producer of Made In England
- The version of the Elton John band that recorded the album was disbanded soon after the May 1975 release. A new Elton John band (with Davey Johnstone and Ray Cooper as the only holdovers) first played live in June 1975. Nigel Olsson and Dee Murray never played any songs from Captain Fantastic And The Brown Dirt Cowboy until they returned to tour with Elton in 1980.
- Is ranked as #158 on the Rolling Stone magazine's list of Top 500 Albums of All Time

THE QUOTES

The following are opinions, reflections and memories about the writing and recording of Captain Fantastic And The Brown Dirt Cowboy by many of the key talents involved in the creation of the album, including Elton John, Bernie Taupin, producer Gus Dudgeon and original band members Davey Johnstone and Nigel Olsson. They were there. And now, you are too. Sort of. Here's what they remember...

- *"It turned out so well because it was the first album that I could identify with in terms of the lyrics...It was passionate...I could associate myself with every song...It's a unique album in our history. This was the story of us"*. (Elton John)

- *"The album's based on the period of time from when we met, to the release of the Empty Sky album in '69. It's really a nostalgic look at London at that time, with our reflections interspersed in between"*. (Bernie Taupin)

- *"The band members were absolutely at their peak and they'd never played that well across a whole album. There are some brilliant performances on it. The songs were great, but the performances are so 'on the money'"*. (Gus Dudgeon)

- *"On Captain Fantastic we were just rolling them out. It was absolutely from the heart. We were so 'there'. Captain Fantastic was such a great album because it was about us. That album was overwhelming. It was a beautiful work of art. It should go down in the Smithsonian"*. (Nigel Olsson)

- *"The process of doing it was unique because I wrote the songs in the order they were recorded, so it was written like a story. That's very strange because you'd think it would be dependent on how the songs worked out melodically...For some reason, it just fell into place"*. (Bernie Taupin)

- *"The song, (Captain Fantastic) speaks for itself. (It) deals with the character of Elton and what he became later on...He was a kid from the suburbs that became this mythical cartoon character. People looked at him as a sort of magical presence in his outfits. My background is farming roots...But I had an incredible feeling about the American West. So I saw myself in those terms - a mixture of English farm boy and American cowboy"*. (Bernie Taupin)

- *"It was really the story of the town mouse meets the country mouse. But we got on"*. (Bernie Taupin)

- *"Tower Of Babel is sort of my fictional look at what we were trying to achieve. We were striving to find a goal. We came up against a lot of things on the way. We found there were sharks in the waters nipping at our heels"*. (Bernie Taupin)

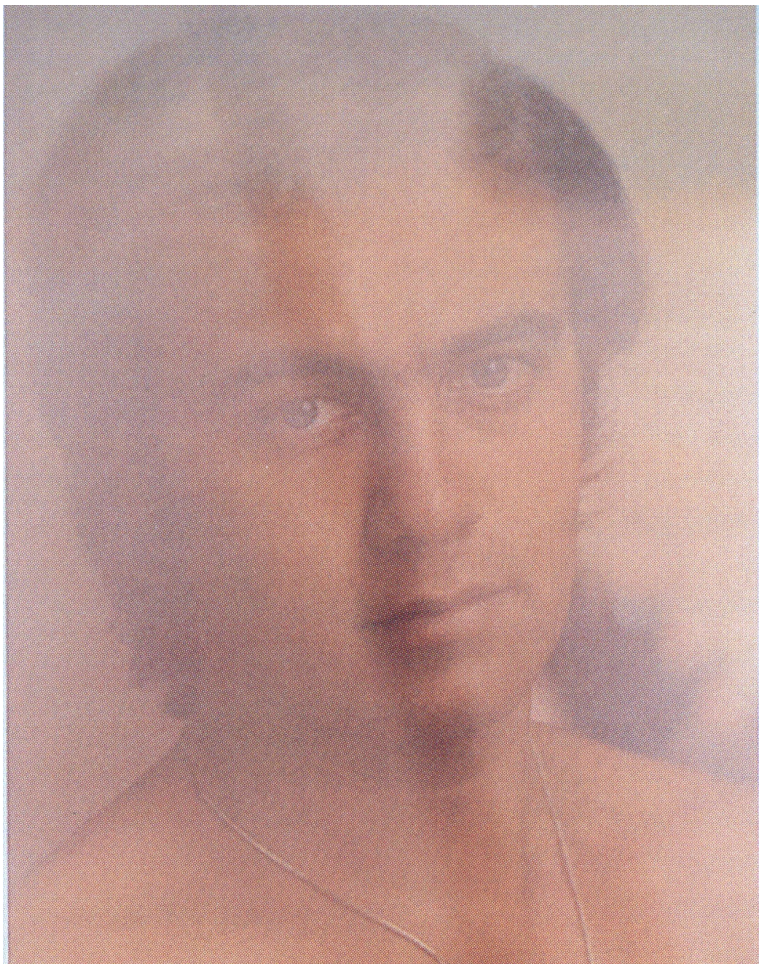
- *"Tell Me When The Whistle Blows is my song. It's a song about missing home. At the time, I was still fairly fresh from the sticks. I still had tremendous ties to my friends back home in Lincolnshire. And I was young...I was 17 years old...People tend to forget how young we were when we started. I had my friends and family back there. I used to stay with Elton and we'd work, but I used to love, on the weekend, to go to Kings Cross, get on that train and get back to Market Rasen. My dad used to pick me up. It was really a great feeling to get home".* (Bernie Taupin)

- *"I wanted to get a Marvin Gaye type feel on* it (Tell Me When The Whistle Blows). *The musicianship on that song and on the album, especially the drumming by Nigel Olsson, is quite superb. That's my favorite track on the whole album".* (Elton John)

- "(Someone Saved My Life Tonight) *was me being a drama queen back then, basically. I went out with Long John Baldry to the Bag O' Nails club one night in Carnaby Street...And he said to me, 'Reggie'...He always called me Reggie, still does '...Reggie, what do you want to get married for? You don't want to get married!' He was right. I knew I didn't...If I had gotten married that would have been the end of me. That's about Long John Baldry saving my life. Without that decision...I would've become a songwriter with a nagging wife".* (Elton John)

- *"Someone Saved My Life Tonight would have to be at the top (of his favorite Elton songs to play on)".* (Nigel Olsson)

- *"The album is very optimistic, yea. There's a lot of fairytale in it and dreaming. And I have to stress, we're talking about two guys who were 17 and 19 years old. Our nights were full of optimism, when we'd record our songs at Dick James' studio on Oxford Street. Those days are very vivid. Those days are far more vivid to me than say, the mid-'70s when we had tremendous success. I look back at those days with great nostalgia. I mean, Elton and I sleeping on the floor of Steve Brown's (an early supporter, mentor and producer) father's Salvation Army place off Oxford Street, and Elton and I going to sleep wondering will it be better tomorrow?"* (Bernie Taupin)



- *"There's a line in Writing about 'will we still be writing in approaching years?' and that's a very nostalgic, optimistic look at our work. It may be child-like, but, again, we were children, basically".* (Bernie Taupin)

- *"On We All Fall In Love Sometimes, Gus had an idea. He said to harmonize with Elton. We thought that would be a bitch because Elton's phrasing is amazing. He's like Frank Sinatra in that way; he phrases his own way. In Curtains, when he sings 'cultivate the freshest flowers', I would come in there. Then we would all come in. To sing those lyrics was probably one of the most explosive things to ever happen to me in my career, and I'm not really a singer. To be able to sing such words that are so beautiful and have the all the guys feel the same way was really scary. Terrifying".* (Davey Johnstone)

- *"We actually recorded We All Fall In Love Sometimes and Curtains in three takes and used the last one. They played it all the way through because there was no way to edit it with all the cymbals and everything. I remember Neil Sedaka came in and said, 'My God, those guys did the whole thing in one hour?'"* (Gus Dudgeon)

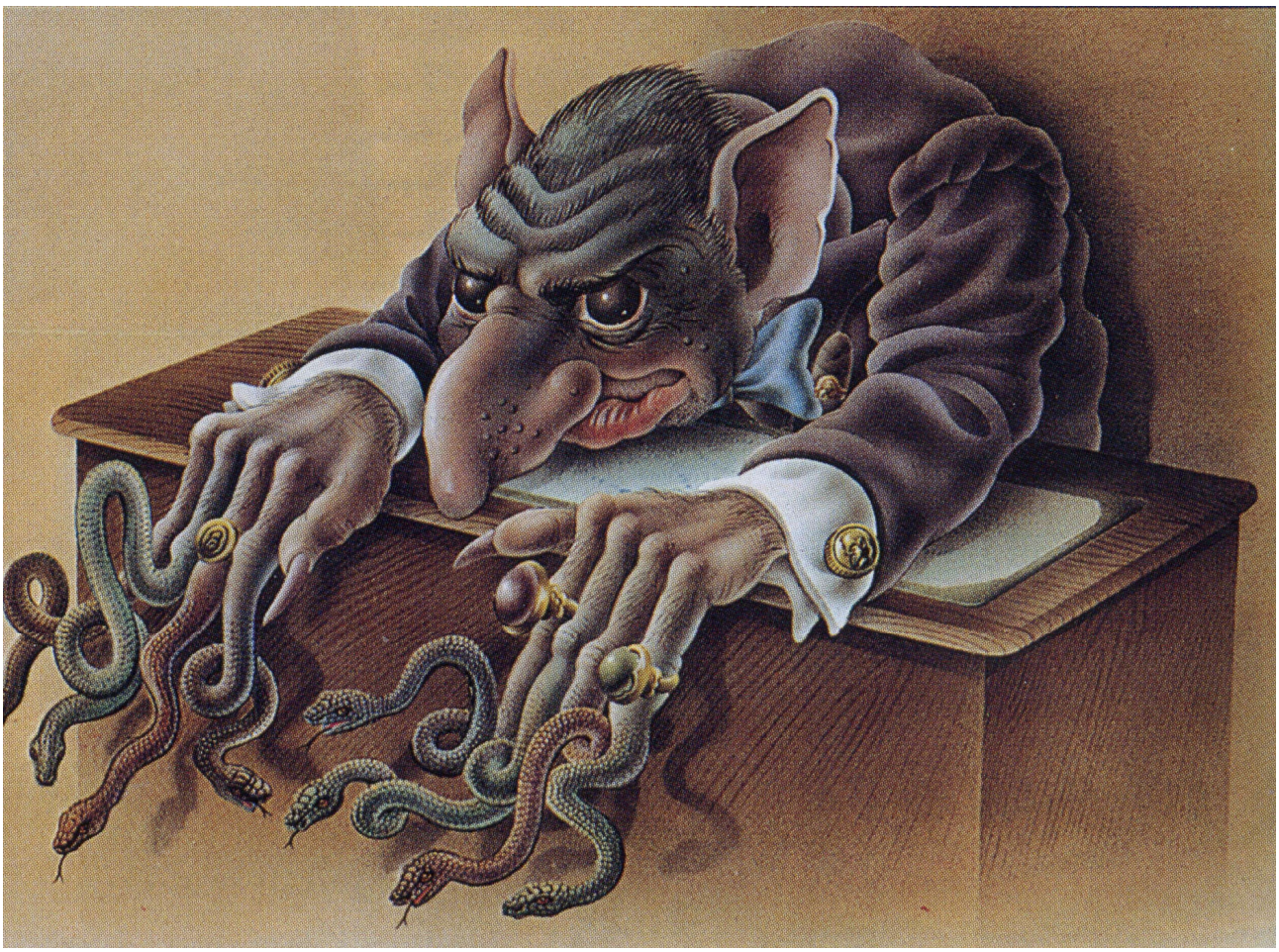
- *"We All Fall In Love Sometimes is a song that says there is something tomorrow. It's a 'once upon a time' song; it's a salute to the future. It's Elton and I walking into the sunset like John Wayne and saying, 'If there is something out there, we're going to find it. And if we find it, we're going to make the best of it'"*. (Bernie Taupin)

- *"We were never as close as we were in those days, in those years when we were honing our craft. That was the time we were living in each other's pockets. We were in bunk beds in his mother's apartment in Northwood Hills, and the only two people who existed for us were each other, except of course for our families. But it was really the two of us"*. (Bernie Taupin)

- *"Bernie was like the brother I never had. We had a great time together during those times. When I hear We All Fall In Love Sometimes and Curtains, the lyrics to that are so beautiful because it sums up our friendship so much, and our relationship. I always have a little tear in my eye when I hear that because he* (Bernie) *said everything in that lyric that I felt about our relationship, and it still exists...In fact, it's stronger today. It's as strong today as it was when he wrote that lyric"*. (Elton John)

- *"I'm very proud of Captain Fantastic. It's one of the best albums, and certainly the best recorded albums, in terms of the sound, that we've ever done. It's Gus Dudgeon at his height"*. (Elton John)

- *"I still listen to it"* (Elton John)



These quotes are taken from various public sources that have appeared during the last 25 years, including East End Lights magazine and a 1981 transcript from the radio program, 'Classic Albums', hosted by Roger Scott.

THE LOST LYRIC

Many of rock's most popular and historical works have a bit of mystery tied to them. Some is real, some imagined by over-zealous fans. The 'clues' of Paul McCartney's death on the cover of Abbey Road, for example, is the most famous.

Captain Fantastic And The Brown Dirt Cowboy has its own share of mysteries; most of them connected to the wild images that artist Alan Aldridge included in its classic cover art. However, there is one lyrical aspect of Captain Fantastic that remains an intriguing loose end. Included on the first page in the album's lyric book, is a Taupin poem titled, Dogs In The Kitchen. Based on many accounts, Elton never recorded this lyric, and there are conflicting accounts if it was intended as a song or poem, or if Elton even wrote a melody to it. In fact, the lyric book includes a disclaimer at the end of the lyric that reads: '*This song is NOT included on the album.*' Its prominent placement in the lyric book and that disclaimer naturally transformed it into instant Elton trivia status, and has kept fans guessing for years.

Dogs In The Kitchen.
All our innocence gave way to lust
As the peacock spread its fan,
And they taught us how to crack the whip
While the business men got tanned.
In the months that passed by the agents cried
And the flunkeys all got paid,
While the fortune seekers pale limp wrists
Showered us with bright bouquets.
Like soldiers on the road to battle
Poor boys fight to stay alive,
Take a roller coaster or the wheel of fortune
Just be sure that you can land it on the other side.
Uncage us where restless, snarled the dogs in the kitchen.
Howling in the heatwave, riding all the bitchin' ladies.
Who got the first bite in on the greasy bone, take my advice kid
Tear off the white meat, leave them the fat back at home.
Empty eyed souls with expense accounts
Take a luncheon eating humble pie.
While the vultures belch in their swivel chairs
And the vampires all wear ties.
From the lips of a sweet young starlet
Amber eyes and sex appeal,
Or a swan song sung by some finger snapping kid
In a cumerbund and cuban heels.
Though the team survived the glass house crashed
And the martyrs all got stoned
But a friend outside slipped a file in
While the jailer slept at home.
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This song is NOT included on the album

If it wasn't written as a proper song, it has been credited as being Taupin's inspiration to embark on the full-blown concept of Captain Fantastic And The Brown Dirt Cowboy.

This theory seems to have some validity, because the lyric is reminiscent in tone and subject matter to both Tower Of Babel and Bitter Fingers, and makes references to the struggles of Elton and Bernie's early writing years, and working within the structures of the music business - all major themes within the Captain Fantastic And The Brown Dirt Cowboy album. .

Its history may be a mystery, there's no doubt it's a compelling Taupin lyric

Dogs In The Kitchen
(By Bernie Taupin)

All our innocence gave way to lust
As the peacock spread its fan,
And they taught us how to crack the whip
While the business men got tanned.

In the months that passed by the agents cried
And the flunkeys all got paid,
While the fortune seekers pale limp wrists
Showered us with bright bouquets.
Like soldiers on the road to battle,
Poor boys fight to stay alive,
Take a rollercoaster or the wheel of fortune
Just be sure you can land it on the other side.

Uncage us where restless, snarled the dogs in the kitchen.
Howling in the heatwave, riding all the bitchin' ladies.
Who got the first bite in on the greasy bone, take my advice kid
Tear off the white meat, leave them the fat back at home.

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THE ALBUM ART

We've always prided ourselves on our album covers and giving quality and information, the lyrics. We...Wanted to make this album (Captain Fantastic) *an explanatory album visually and information-wise".* - Elton John

"The big thing was the cover, which was just a brilliant piece of animation by Alan Aldridge that perfectly summed up the cartoon aspect of our lives at that time. I think it was quite remarkable and unique for its time. You can put that cover next to 'Sgt. Pepper' and get the same feeling". - Bernie Taupin

Captain Fantastic boasts the most elaborate and celebrated album cover and packaging of any of Elton's albums. The gatefold cover art (which loses its jolting effectiveness in the CD format) is a satirical and sexy smorgasbord for the eyes and imagination. The original vinyl album's packaging and art direction was expansive and ambitious. The artistic direction of the album was lead by both David Larkham and Bernie Taupin, and the album's autobiographical musical theme was carried out throughout the entire presentation. The inner album sleeve included newer and vintage snapshots of Elton and Bernie, referred to as 'The Captain' and 'The Kid', respectively, and a group shot of Elton and the band.

Also included was an expanded lyric book, and a nostalgic scrapbook of early newspaper notices, concert posters, family photos and even Elton's authentic diary entries from the late '60s. The scrapbook includes a sanitized comic book version of Elton's story, titled, 'The Life And Loves Of Elton John'. This had been previously published in Jackie, a British teenage magazine. But the added bonus was an impressive full-color poster of the entire cover, by noted artist and illustrator, Alan Aldridge. Aldridge was one of the leading pop artists of the '60s and '70s, with his surreal, imaginative work that combined a bold uses of color, clever and complex images, and a mix of subtle and black humor. His work with The Beatles catapulted his name and reputation, and he also worked with The Who, The Rolling Stones, Cream, and Andy Warhol. John Lennon once dubbed him 'His Royal Master of Images to Their Majesties The Beatles', and he published two volumes of the 'Beatles Illustrated Lyrics' in 1969 and 1970.

Drawn with Aldridge's creative pen, the famous gatefold album cover depicts the dark excess of rock 'n' roll, while introducing the album's two main 'characters' among the lunacy. Aldridge offers Elton as the self-proclaimed 'city-slick Captain', seemingly breaking out of his suburban, inner shell to ride confidently into the music world on his trusted piano. And the dream-weaving, wordsmith Bernie Taupin is portrayed as the bucolic 'Brown Dirt Cowboy'. Taupin appears 'still green and growing', secluded tightly in his own glass ball by the simplicity of a country-like setting.

The cover is an artistic assault of the visual senses. The surreal, disturbing, reality-bending, and at times grotesque images nod to the influence of surrealists Dali and Bosch. And this bold, unapologetic tone remains a key element in the album's overall influence, respect and reputation. The ambitious and captivating cover design earned Aldridge a Grammy Award nomination. According to Aldridge, interviewed exclusively for this feature, the project began simple but quickly grew in scope.

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